REMARKS

Claims 1-41 are currently pending in this application. These claims have been rejected. By the present amendment, claim 9 has been cancelled and claim 1 has been amended. No new matter has been added. Amended claim 1 now clarifies that the pressure sensitive adhesive is solvent-based.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner objects to the specification, asserting that it does not "provide a specific definition of a transient processing aid and a permanent processing aid" and that "no clear delineation between the two" is provided. Applicants disagree. It can be found at pages 14-15, and in particular, page 15, lines 16-17 of the specification, a description that certain alkanes are "transient." See for example, Examples 37 and 38 of the instant specification, where alkanes such as tetradecane and hexadecane are used in compositions that have improved tack. Furthermore, at page 15, lines 5-15, a test is described for determining the suitability of a processing aid. The Examiner agrees that examples of both types (e.g. transient or permanent) of processing aids are indeed exemplified in the application. Applicants submit that these examples, in addition to the description provided throughout the application, are sufficient and clearly convey the difference between a transient and a permanent processing aid. Applicants request that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejections

Claims 1-8, 10-18, 32, 33, 36, and 40-41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,107,222 to Joseph et al.

Joseph et al. is directed to repositionable sheets having a layer of nonwoven web on a backing. The web includes fibers and a pressure sensitive adhesive having self tacky or tackified polymers. These adhesive are useful as hot melt adhesives, typically used in melt-blown fiber products that generally require water-based adhesive compositions.

The presently claimed invention reflects Applicants' discovery that certain PSAs that included high levels of silicate tackifying resins(e.g. greater than about 50 wt%), when dried, often lose its tack due to the tackifier migrating to the liner interface. This occurs in for example,

solventborne silicone-based PSAs, and in particular, in thicker coatings. To resolve this problem, Applicants found that it may be advantageous to use a processing aid, such as a plasticizer for example, to help the tackifier remain more homogeneously distributed and prevent a coated surface from losing its tack.

Applicants' claimed invention, as presented in the newly amended claims, is neither taught nor suggested in Joseph et al. Only now, by Applicants' disclosure, is the use of a processing aid recognized as beneficial for imparting to a solvent-borne silicone-based PSA the ability to retain tack. Absent the present teaching, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the composition of Joseph et al. to obtain a solvent-borne system, as described and claimed herein. Since Joseph et al. teaches water-based system PSAs, while Applicants have achieved solvent-based PSA compositions, a skilled artisan would have had no motivation nor expectation of successfully obtaining a solvent-based PSA. Mere reliance on the teaching of Joseph et al. is insufficient in achieving the presently claimed invention, as the reference provides no guidance as to how to work within a significantly different system. Applicants therefore request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-3, 7-23, 27-41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 96/34028.

Sherman et al. relates to a tackified composition that includes a curable polyorganosiloxane oligourea segmented copolymer. The polymer has reactive end groups (e.g. free radical or moisture curable groups), thereby imparting the curability to the composition.

Unlike and unobvious over Sherman et al., Applicants' claimed invention is directed to PSAs having polymers that are distinctly different from Sherman et al. The PSAs as instantly claimed need not be curable and therefore can be made to have other types of silicone-based polymers. Absent such a suggestion, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have found it obvious to diverge from the teaching of Sherman et al. to achieve the PSA as described in the present application. Significantly, there is also no suggestion in Sherman et al. of the desirability to include a processing aid and in the effective amounts as Applicants have discovered and taught in the application. While Sherman et al. indeed discusses various additives such as filler,

plasticizers, pigments, etc., the reference lacks any suggestion or teaching as to the desirability or result of adding a processing aid to maintain tack in a dried adhesive.

For the reasons provided above, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

The claims are now in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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